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 PERS: Levitas, S. M.
 PERS: Supacomb, Stannard F. (Rep)

Books by Uncle Sam

A Leak Uncovers the Hidden Voice Of U.S. Agencies in Publications

The volume is a handsome, scholarly collection of essays that can be bought at any bookstore for \$5.95. Its 443 pages, crammed with studies of communism's attempts to subvert free governments, so impressed the Book-of-the-Month Club that the club is offering it as an alternate selection in June, assuring wider circulation.

What neither the bookstore shopper nor the Book-of-the-Month Club's directors knew—until word leaked out of a Congressional hearing—was that the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) invested \$14,952 in *Strategy of Deception: A Study of World-Wide Communist Tactics*. It is one of a number of books published with the support of the agency's \$90,000-a-year book-development program and sold commercially in the United States without notice to the reader of its sponsorship.

What's more, there are indications that USIA is not alone among Government agencies in underwriting the costs of literature tailored to their specifications and sold in this country.

Questions From Mr. Rooney

USIA's interest in domestic publishers was revealed in heavily edited Congressional testimony on the agency's budget. Agency director Carl Rowan's request for a \$105,000 increase in the book-development fund (bringing the total to \$195,000) drew a series of questions about the nature of the program from New York Democrat John Rooney, economy-minded chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee that handles agency funds.

The testimony also raised questions about the USIA's adherence to the legal ban on using appropriations for "publicity or propaganda purposes" at home.

The book-development program is directed at producing books for circulation abroad that will enhance the U.S. image and wouldn't be produced otherwise without Government support. "It is a program," said Reed Harris, head of the agency's information-center service, "under which we can have books written to our own specifications We control the thing from the very idea down to the final edited manuscript."

What kind of books are put out? Agency officials insisted on deleting the names and details in the subcommittee transcript, but the type of book was made clear.

It was only through oversight that the agency's sponsorship of *Strategy of Deception* came to light. USIA editors failed to blank out a reference in Mr. Harris' testimony to a certain book that he said "covers the whole Communist strategy of deception."

Agency officials explain their secrecy about the program on the grounds that foreigners reading material known to be Government-sponsored would not be inclined to believe it.

The trouble arises when the books underwritten by the agency are sold in the United States.

Deal With the New Leader

The idea for *Strategy of Deception*, for example, was conceived by S. M. Levitas, late executive editor of the New Leader magazine. He approached the USIA because he lacked funds for the venture. The book eventually was published by the New York firm of Farrar, Straus and Co. Roger W. Straus, Jr., the firm's president, knew of the arrangement with USIA, but the volume's editor, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, an authority on communism, did not. In return for \$12,000 paid by USIA to the New Leader, the agency received 2,000 copies of *Strategy of Deception* for distribution overseas. The publisher printed 25,000 copies for domestic consumption. The magazine and Farrar, Straus will split the book's royalties.

The agency has a similar arrangement with a Washington publisher, Robert B. Luce, Inc., which plans to bring out six books under the title *America Today* with a USIA subsidy of \$25,510. The company publishes the liberal New Republic magazine.

Agency director Rowan and his staff defend the practice on the grounds that if domestic distribution were forbidden, publishers couldn't afford to produce USIA-backed books without a much larger agency investment. They also fear that putting a Government label on the books sold at home would scare American shoppers away. Our aim, says Mr. Rowan, is not to "propagandize the American people" but to promote the U.S. cause abroad.

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